GRASI

Gulf Regional Airspace Strategic Initiative

Eglin Air Force Base, Florida

LANDSCAPE INITIATIVE

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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This printed volume contains the Executive Summary of the *Final GRASI Landscape Initiative Environmental Impact Statement*, and the entire EIS and appendices on the CD in the pocket below.

Click on hyperlinks to jump to an element, and hold down the "Alt" key while pressing the "left-arrow" key to GO BACK.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Gulf Regional Airspace Strategic Initiative (GRASI) region (Figure ES-1) consists of the eastern Gulf of Mexico region, which includes northwest Florida, southern Mississippi, lower Alabama, southern Georgia, and the eastern Gulf of Mexico. The GRASI is a collaborative planning effort between military and civilian leaders designed to ensure the future availability and capacity of regional airspace and training lands for military use and the continued economic prosperity of the Gulf coast. The entire GRASI planning process, goals, objectives, and strategies are in the *GRASI Strategic Plan*, at http://grasi.leidoseemg.com.

This Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) examines the potential environmental impacts resulting from the implementation of the Proposed Action and associated Subalternative. The Proposed Action is the implementation of the GRASI Landscape Initiative (GLI) in the region of northwest Florida. The GLI is a U.S. Air Force-led partnership with the State of Florida to provide military units with compatible locations that can serve as an outlet for training activities when they are otherwise unable to meet their requirements using current military training areas. Specifically, this EIS addresses locations in the Blackwater River State Forest (BRSF) and Tate's Hell State Forest (THSF) (Figure ES-2) for general training operations, as well as small, noncontiguous land areas throughout the region for permanent and mobile radar emitter sites. The Subalternative addressed in this EIS is a subset of activities associated with the Proposed Action; the Subalternative is a "smaller-scale" version of the Proposed Action.

ES.1. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ANALYSIS PROCESS (EIAP)

The proposed activities addressed within this document constitute a federal action and, therefore, must be assessed in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). NEPA requires federal agencies to consider the environmental consequences of proposed actions in the decision-making process (42 United States Code [USC] 4321, et seq.). The Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) was established under NEPA, 42 USC 4342, et seq., to implement and oversee federal policy in this process. In 1978, the CEQ issued regulations implementing the NEPA process under Title 40, Code of Federal Regulations (CFR), Parts 1500–1508. The Air Force EIAP for meeting CEQ requirements is accomplished via procedures set forth in CEQ regulations and 32 CFR Part 989. This EIS has been prepared in accordance with NEPA and 32 CFR Part 989.

Figure ES-1. GRASI Regional Airspace

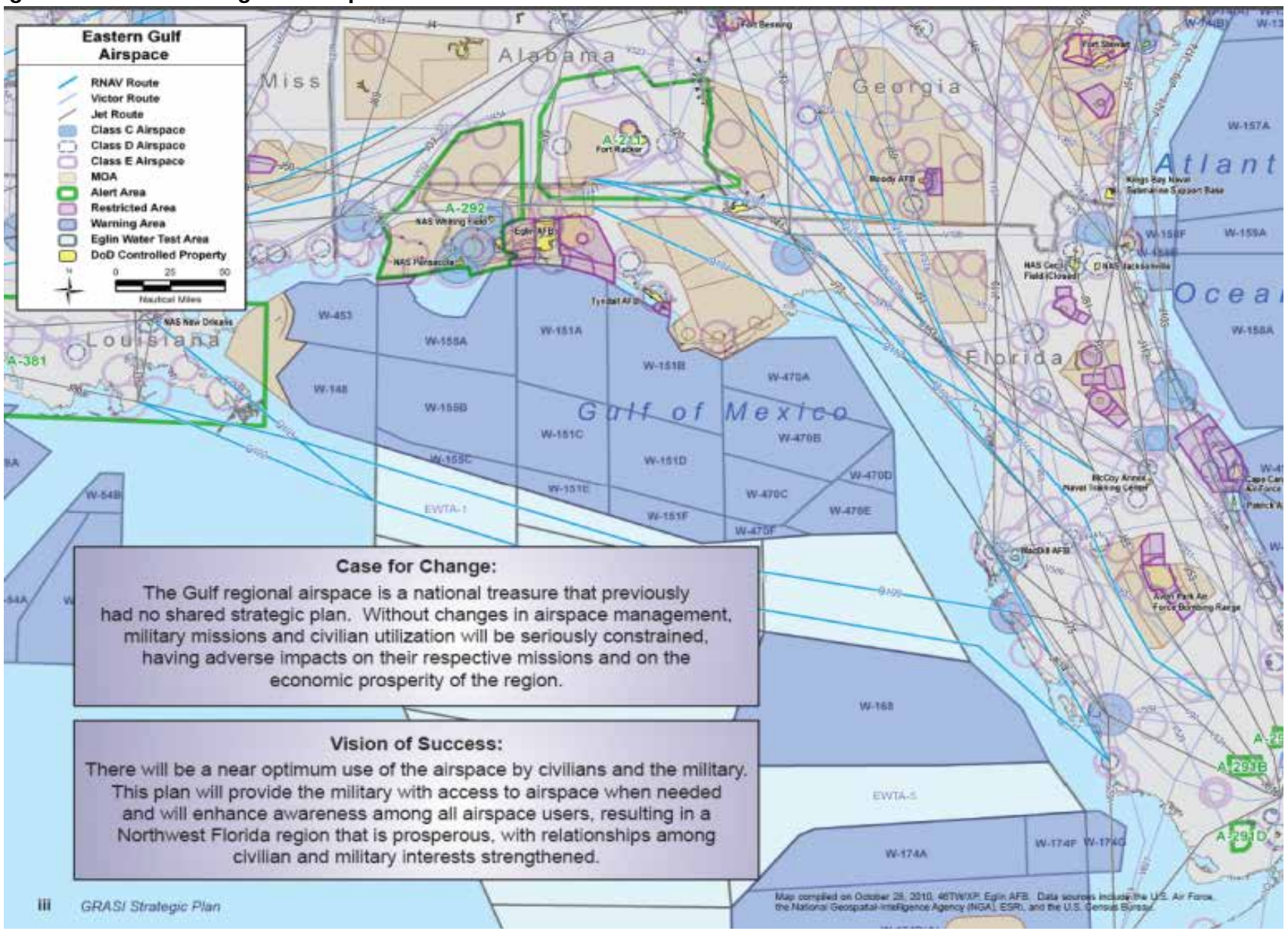
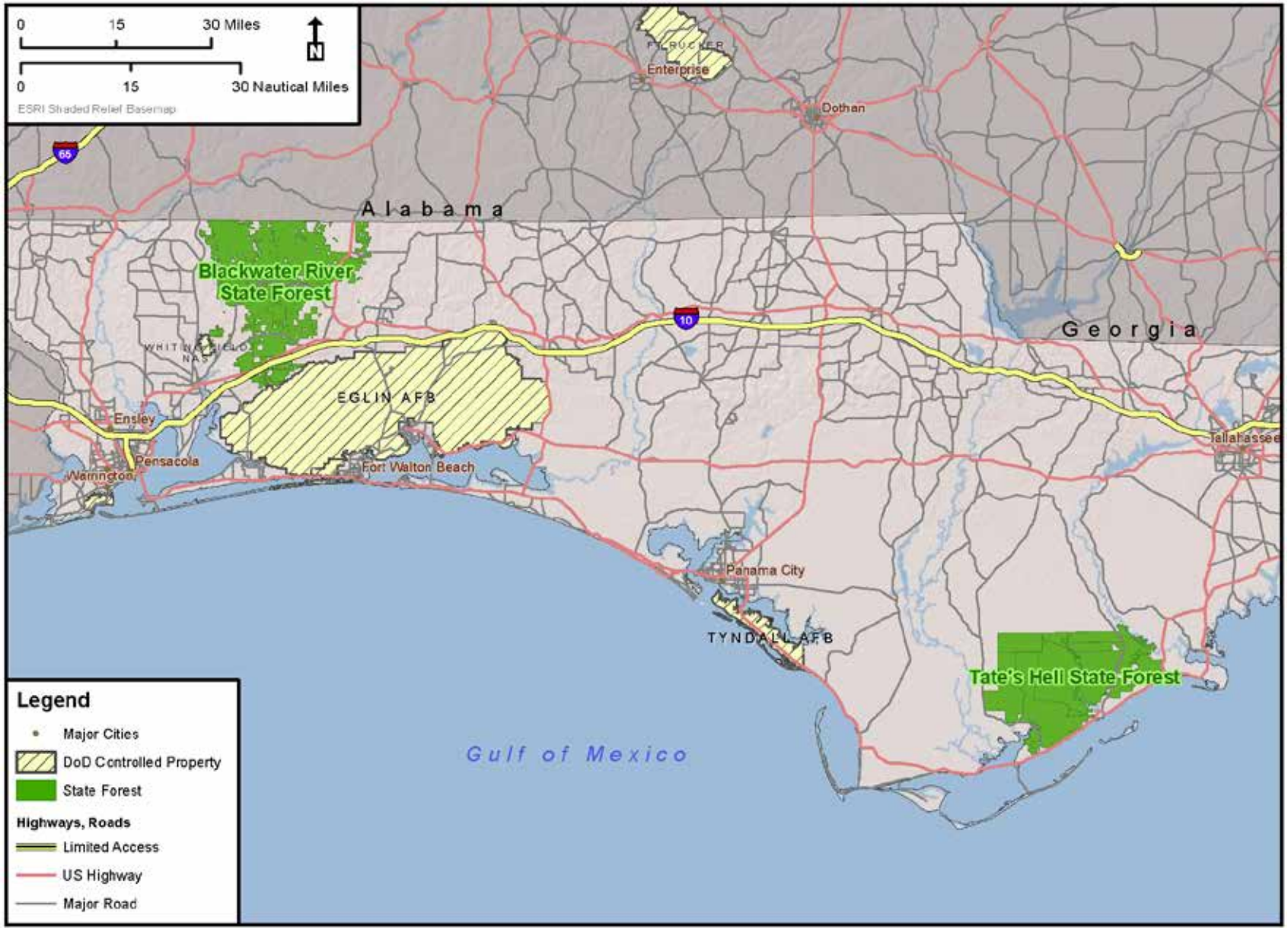


Figure ES-2. Location of Blackwater River and Tate's Hell State Forests



ES.2. PURPOSE AND NEED

ES.2.1 Purpose

The purpose of the Proposed Action is to analyze the suitability of state lands already identified by state agencies, pursuant to memoranda of agreement under the GRASI Strategic Plan, as potentially available for siting training emitters and conducting a variety of nonhazardous military training activities to meet short-term needs. The intent of the GLI is not to establish new, dedicated-use military ranges but rather to develop additional training flexibility and diversity potentially available through established partnerships and agreements for use when training flexibility at existing military bases is not available. The intent of the GLI, therefore, is to provide military units with compatible locations that can serve as an outlet for training activities when they are otherwise unable to meet their requirements using current military training areas.

Specifically, this Proposed Action (the GLI, a component of the GRASI) is designed to develop additional regional training flexibility for nonhazardous military operations. This would be accomplished through two types of partnerships. The Air Force would partner with the State of Florida to obtain permits to use lands that the state has already identified as potentially available for training: BRSF and THSF (Figure ES-2). In addition, the Air Force would partner with the Florida Forest Service (FFS) and Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC) for use of associated lands for placement of temporary and mobile training radar emitters. Because complete implementation of these two partnerships may not add sufficient regional flexibility, the Air Force will continue to pursue and cultivate additional partnerships with other agencies. Such future actions, if and when agreed to and defined in sufficient detail for NEPA analysis, would be evaluated at the appropriate level under separate NEPA documentation.

ES.2.2 Need

The Proposed Action is needed because there is a projected regional shortfall of military training and testing land and airspace in the GRASI region. The demand for the land range and use of restricted area over the Eglin Range Complex creates scheduling conflicts for nonhazardous training. The 96th Test Wing manages the Eglin Range to optimally schedule training and test activities. When testing activities for new aircraft and weapons systems occur, hundreds of thousands of acres of Eglin's range must be closed to training uses. Eglin AFB balances these training and testing mission requirements using a robust prioritization and scheduling process. This process allows Eglin AFB to meet the demands for those activities that the range has the capacity to support. When requested mission activities exceed the range's capabilities and capacity, additional training space is needed for compatible, nonhazardous mission activities. The Proposed Action is designed to provide an outlet for training only when the existing range space cannot accommodate training needs.

These measures would allow some mission activities a place to operate when the airspace is already being used by other mission activities. Emitter sites create realistic threat scenarios for pilots and more realistic training scenarios by simulating an integrated air defense system (IADS), which helps with identifying and countering enemy missile or artillery threats from land or sea.

ES.3. DECISION TO BE MADE

For purposes of this EIS, the decision to be made is whether to implement the Proposed Action (create flexibility by obtaining necessary permits/leases to use emitter sites in northwest Florida and conduct training activities as another permitted user of BRSF and THSF), Subalternative 1 (a reduced-scale version of the Proposed Action), or the No Action Alternative. The decision to be made also includes how to implement elements of the Proposed Action and the frequency of training activities. Implementation of the No Action Alternative would mean continuing all current training activities at the Eglin Range Complex using training workarounds to try to meet units' training needs to the maximum extent possible. The decision will be made by the Air Force Deputy Assistant Secretary for Installations (SAF/IEI).

It is important to note that Air Force decision-makers actually have a myriad of potential alternatives from which to choose. Each of the different training and emitter activities described in Chapter 2 can be completely eliminated from consideration or geographically or temporally restricted as part of eventual decisions to be made. The Air Force can therefore select from a broad spectrum of actions that are deemed compatible with current land uses.

The Air Force is employing this GLI EIS process to get public, partner, and agency feedback to assess training compatibility. Because this is a proposal for partnering with other agencies, the Air Force understands how crucial this feedback is to implementing a viable proposal. Ultimately, partner agencies, not the Air Force, will make final decisions to permit GLI activities.

ES.4. PROPOSED ACTION AND ALTERNATIVES

The Proposed Action consists of two main components: establishment and use of emitter training sites on GRASI partner lands and applying to the FFS and FWC to be a permitted user of the northwest Florida state forests for nonhazardous training activities. Because Subalternative 1 consists of the same activities under the Proposed Action, only at a reduced scale, both the Proposed Action and Subalternative 1 are described within the same sections, with the differences between the two highlighted for easy comparison. This Proposed Action may not provide the most comprehensive solution for all training needs, as described in Sections 2.1 and 2.2. Should other partnerships identify additional training locations, they will be considered in conjunction with the appropriate level of additional NEPA analysis. At this time, no other suitable training locations have been identified in conjunction with GRASI partners as potentially available for use and no other elements of the GLI proposal have adequate project definition to warrant inclusion in this EIS.

At this time, no end-date is defined for whatever training use is ultimately approved by the FFS, the FWC, and State of Florida. Training activities would be projected to occur until such time as adequate range capacity became available on Eglin AFB to support the necessary training requirements. Ultimately, the FFS and FWC would specify the length of time that training activities would be permitted. The plans to support and manage these activities will need to be reviewed annually and approved, if they are determined to still be compatible with existing land uses.

ES.4.1 Proposed Action / Subalternative 1

ES.4.1.1 Emitter Sites

A component of both the Proposed Action and Subalternative 1 is to establish up to 12 radar, telemetry, and emitter training sites throughout northwest Florida to support development of a simulated IADS to be used for air training. Radar and telemetry emitters are used for tracking aircraft and navigation; training emitters are radar simulator systems designed to help train military personnel to identify and counter enemy missile or artillery threats from land or sea. Types of emitters would vary depending on need, and their use would be determined by constraints associated with the site and respective operational parameters of the specific system. As an example, use of high-powered systems with large safety hazard distances may be restricted at sites in close proximity to populated areas.

Emitter training sites identified would utilize FFS and FWC lands via leasing agreements. These sites would accommodate mobile and temporary use; mobile use means that the site would be used for a day with operators on-site, while temporary use may last for several days. Proposed locations are shown in Figure ES-3. The majority of sites identified as part of the screening process are associated with FFS fire spotting towers, while two sites are owned by FWC and one site by Eglin AFB. All sites are either “improved” or “semi-improved.” Not all proposed sites may be used, and only several at any one time would be operational.

ES.4.1.2 Training Activities in Northwest Florida State Forests

Training activities associated with the Proposed Action and Subalternative 1 consist of utilizing existing areas cleared by the FFS as part of regular forest management activities for helicopter landing and drop zones, use of existing airfields for aircraft landings, and a number of different land and air training activities. These activities currently occur in the areas between designated test/training sites on the Eglin Range. The Air Force proposes to create flexibility by obtaining the necessary permits and leases to use public lands when current military training areas are not available for these activities. Specifically, suitable areas within two state forests in northwest Florida, BRSF and THSF, would be leased through agreements with FFS.

For the purposes of this EIS, each state forest has been divided into “tactical areas” (TAs), which correlate to each state forest recreational area as shown in Figures ES-4 and ES-5. Training activities may occur in any of the TAs, subject to restrictions identified via coordination with the FFS during the planning process, as well as any constraints or mitigations identified in this EIS. Training in the TAs would provide flexibility for those training units that are unable to schedule time on the Eglin Range or in the restricted area due to other higher-priority activities or range congestion.

All training activities in the state forests would be conducted per the requirements of Eglin AFB Instruction (EAFBI) 13-212, *Range Planning and Operations*, Chapter 7 – Environmental Management (December 2010, Interim Change on 9 September 2011), as applicable, and in accordance with the respective state forest management plans. EAFBI 13-212, Chapter 7, is available at http://grasieis.leidoseemg.com/documentation.aspx.

Figure ES-3. Location Overview of Proposed Emitter Sites

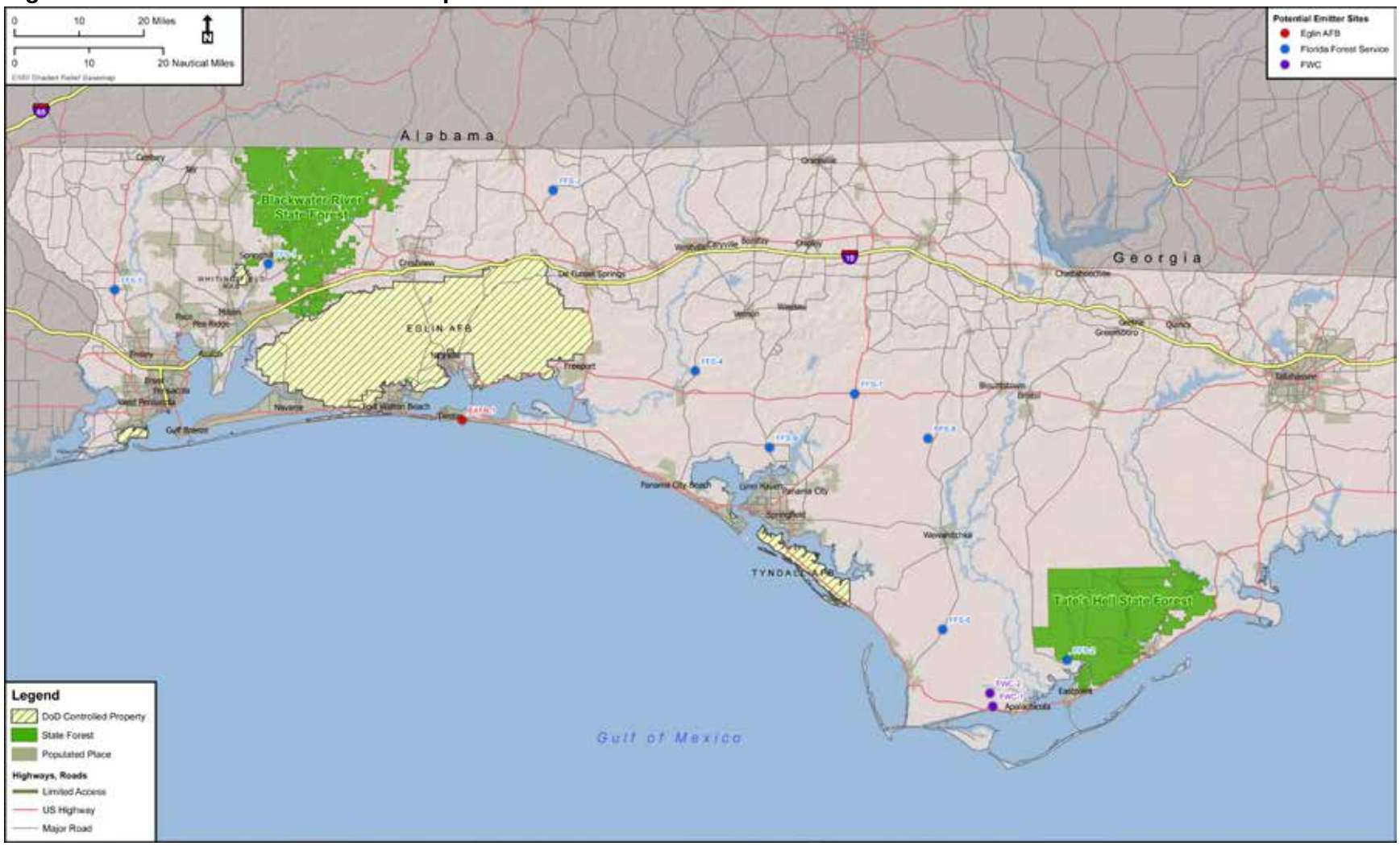


Figure ES-4. BRSF Tactical Areas

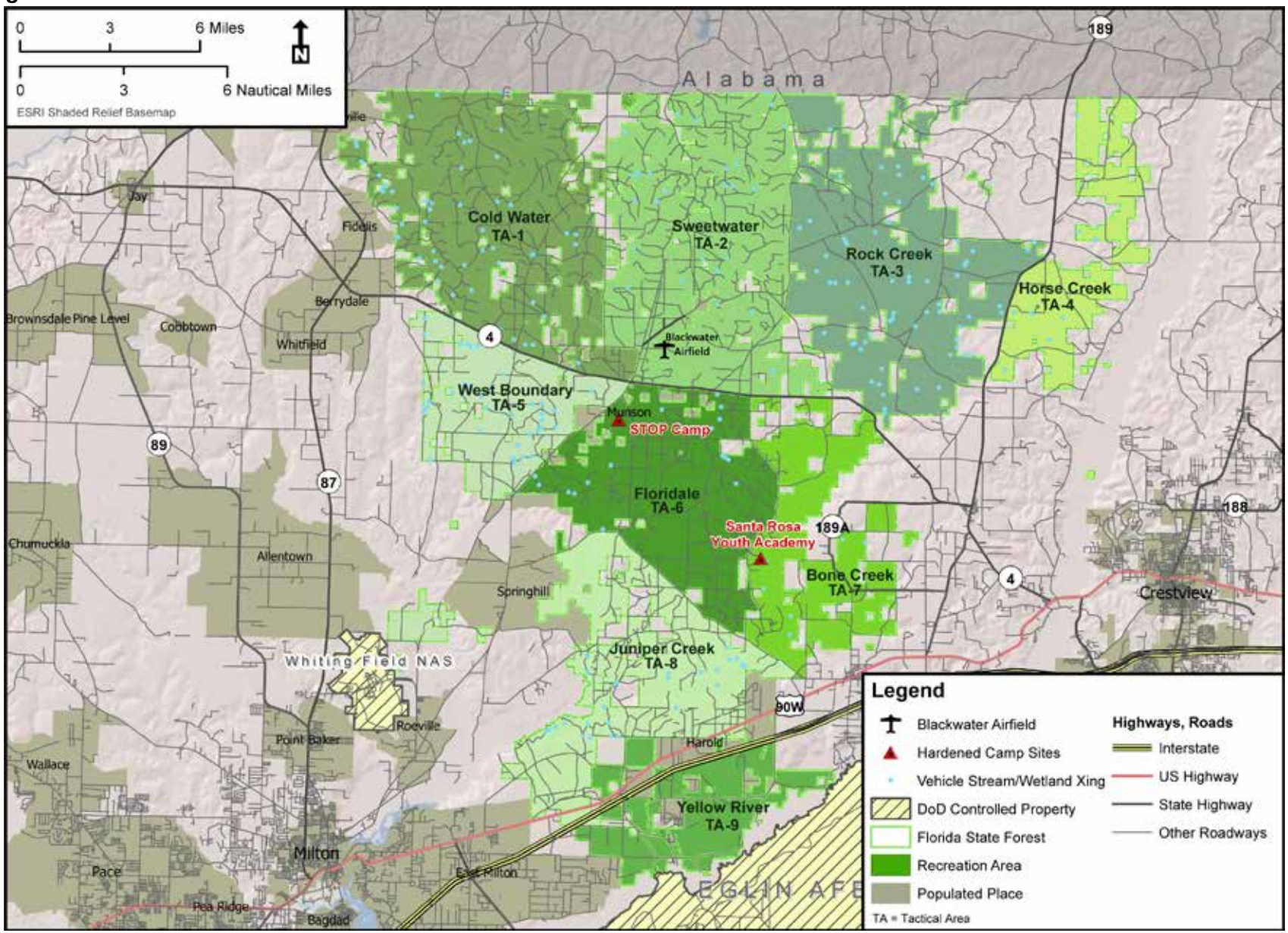
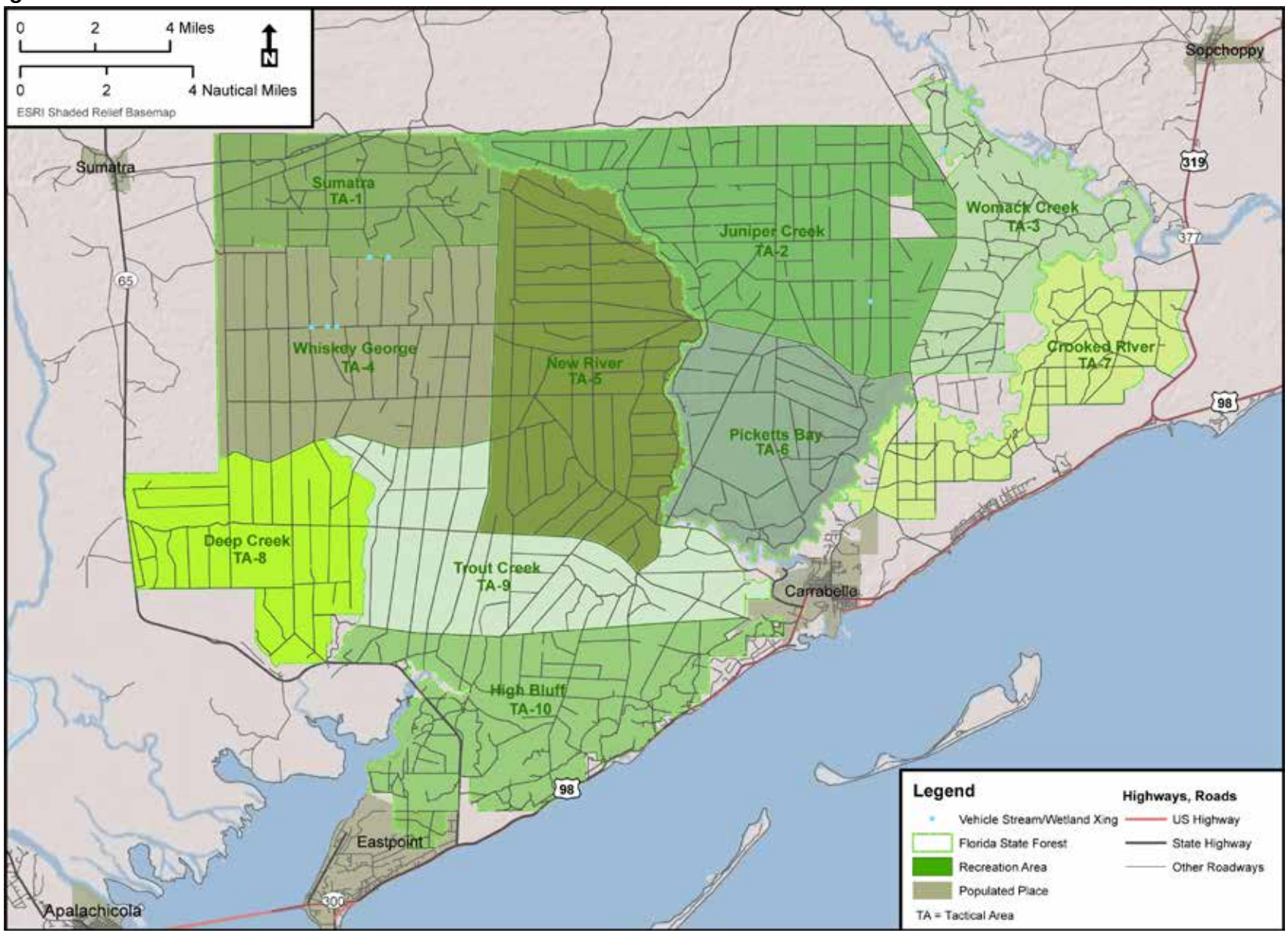


Figure ES-5. THSF Tactical Areas



The following subsections summarize proposed training activities; more detailed information can be found in Section 2.3.2 of the GLI EIS. These activities would be carried out by units of Air Force Special Operations Command located at Hurlburt Field, units of the 7th Special Forces Group (Airborne) located at Eglin AFB, F-35 Joint Strike Fighter and support units, and other Department of Defense units.

Training activities described under the Proposed Action are not mutually exclusive, and some training activities would occur in support of other activities or subsequent to other training activities. An example would be a training mission involving several helicopters flying from Eglin AFB to a BRSF tactical area Helicopter Landing Zone/Drop Zone (HLZ/DZ) where personnel and equipment would be dropped via an Airdrop or a low-level insertion/extraction. Personnel may then conduct Cross-Country Dismounted Movement (CCDM) training to hardened camp site location or another helicopter landing zone, while along the way bivouacking, Conducting Communications and Surveillance Operations (CCSO), and utilizing expendables. Once reaching their objective, they would be extracted either via another low-level insertion/extraction or Cross-Country Vehicle Movement (CCVM). Aircraft would use existing military operations areas and controlled airspace, as is currently done, to maneuver between Eglin AFB and the state forests.

The intent for implementing GLI training would be to start slowly and increase nonhazardous training utilization of THSF or BRSF to acceptable levels that are compatible with and can be supported by the FFS. Training would only be implemented to the extent that Department of Defense (DoD) units need the additional off-base training capacity to support nonhazardous activities. It is important to understand that new lands would not support full training utilization like dedicated military training ranges at Eglin AFB.

It is difficult to predict just how frequently units would utilize GLI locations to support their training requirements. Given this uncertainty, this EIS Proposed Action analysis evaluates impacts based on a “maximum-use scenario” that has been developed for each training activity. Evaluation of this scenario ensures that impact characterizations are conservative and do not underrepresent potential impacts should there be an occasion where maximum potential use would occur. Additionally, each maximum-use scenario is applied and analyzed for each forest in the event that one forest is unavailable for a certain type of training due to scheduling issues or other factors; this ensures that each forest is similarly treated in terms of potential impact. These maximum-use scenarios are detailed in tables accompanying each activity description and are based on existing Eglin AFB usage within the Eglin Range.

For Subalternative 1 a “reduced-scale scenario” is evaluated that identifies specific locations for training, as well as a number of activities and associated frequency and duration that are reduced from the “maximum-use” scenario addressed under the Proposed Action. As an example, under Subalternative 1 no expendable use would occur anywhere in either forest with the exception of the hardened camp sites at BRSF. These Subalternative 1 details are highlighted in conjunction with descriptions of the Proposed Action. Under either scenario, numbers of personnel used during training activities typically range from 10 to 50 and may involve any number and type of vehicles. Personnel would travel to BRSF either by road or aircraft as part of training.

The goal of the analysis in the EIS is to identify potential impact areas and identify constraints associated with their use as related to the training activities described in Chapter 2. The analyses identify (1) potential impacts associated with training activities, (2) areas that should be avoided for certain activities, and (3) any mitigations or management requirements needed to minimize adverse impacts. The user constraints and mitigations would be used for planning and scheduling purposes by the Air Force in coordination with the FFS.

ES.4.1.2.1 Helicopter Landing Zones/Drop Zones

Typical HLZ/DZ

Under both the Proposed Action and Subalternative 1, existing cleared areas within the state forests would be utilized as landing sites for helicopters and DZs for personnel and equipment from various aircraft (either fixed- or rotary wing). Under the Proposed Action several sites located throughout the state forests may be established and utilized at any one time. These sites would be open areas that have already been cleared of tall vegetation by the FFS through regular forest management activities. Under Subalternative 1, 16 initial LZ/DZ locations (including Blackwater Airfield) have been identified for potential use: 13 at BRSF and 3 at THSF. Under the Proposed Action and Subalternative 1, up to eight LZs/DZs (including the hardened camp site locations and Blackwater Airfield) may be active at one time, distributed between the forests. Table ES-1 details HLZ/DZ activities.

Table ES-1. LZ/DZ Details

Proposed Action / Subalternative 1					
Vehicles/Aircraft	**# Personnel**	**Expendables/ Equipment**	**Duration**	**Frequency**	**Restrictions**
None[1]	Varies depending on size and location of LZ/DZ as well as associated training activity (see subsequent sections).				Only utilize locations previously cleared by the FFS as part of regular forest activities. No land disturbance in wetlands or floodplains; no new impervious surfaces.
Subalternative 1 Locations					
LZ/DZ Identifier	**Location / Description**				**Approximate Size (rounded to nearest acre)**
Blackwater Airfield	A FFS-managed airfield to which the FFS permits public access on a "request" basis, should its condition be judged safe and not otherwise in use. The Air Force would also request to use the airfield in a similar manner.				25
BW2	Reclaimed Oil Well Site				1
BW3	Reclaimed Oil Well Site				1
BW6	Wildlife Opening				7
BW7	Wildlife Opening				6
BW8	Wildlife Opening				6

Table ES-1. LZ/DZ Details, Cont'd

Subalternative 1 Locations (Cont'd)		
LZ/DZ Identifier	Location / Description	Approximate Size (rounded to nearest acre)
BW9	Wildlife Opening	7
BW10	Wildlife Opening	7
BW11	Wildlife Opening	3
BW12	Wildlife Opening	57
BW13	STOP Camp	3
BW14	Clay Pit	11
BW17	SRYA Ball Field	2
TH2	Existing FFS helo-pad	2
TH4	Existing FFS helo-pad	1
TH6	Existing FFS helo-pad	0.5

LZ = landing zone; DZ = drop zone; FFS = Florida Forest Service; SRYA = Santa Rosa Youth Academy; STOP = Short-Term Offender Program

1. Establishment, operations, and maintenance as part of regular FFS activities; the Air Force would not conduct land-disturbing activities.

ES.4.1.2.2 Use of Expendables

Smoke Grenade

Use of Expendables (UoEX) involves use of various training munitions and pyrotechnics, including simulated munitions (consisting of plastic pellets or paintballs, which produce little or no noise) and smoke grenades during training activities. For the Proposed Action, at BRSF, noise-generating expendables (e.g., blanks) would only be used at hardened camp site locations and at THSF, noise-generating expendables could be used anywhere (pending results of analysis and consideration of use restrictions as identified in this EIS). Under Subalternative 1 no expendables would be used outside hardened camp sites at BRSF; and there would be no expendable use at THSF. Table ES-2 details UoEX activities.

Table ES-2. UoEX Details

Proposed Action			
Expendable Type	Estimated Maximum Quantity Per Year	Estimated Average Per Event	Restrictions
5.56-millimeter blank	~576,000	~10,000	Avoid hunting season concflicts per the FFS (EIS Sections 5.10/6.10). Police brass/expendable waste, avoid public use areas when using blanks. At BRSF noise-generating expendable use only at hardened camp sites.
7.62-millimeter blank	~196,200	~8,000	
Ground burst simulators	~5,172	~2 to 5	
M-18 smoke grenades	~4,038	~2 to 5	
Paintballs/plastic pellets	~50,000	~5,000	
Flares	Emergency use only – not associated with training activities		

Table ES-2. UoEX Details, Cont'd

Expendable Type	Estimated Maximum Quantity Per Year	Estimated Average Per Event	Restrictions
Subalternative 1			
5.56-millimeter blank	~600,000	~10,000	Activity consists of 60 total days per year, with frequency up to eight 5-day periods. Avoid hunting season concflicts per the FFS (EIS Sections 5.10/6.10). Police brass/expendable waste. Expendable use only at BRSF hardened camp sites. None at THSF.
7.62-millimeter blank			
Ground burst simulators	~5,172	~2 to 5	
M-18 smoke grenades	~4,038	~2 to 5	
Paintballs/plastic pellets	~50,000	~5,000	
Flares	Emergency use only – not associated with training activities		

BRSF = Blackwater River State Forest; EIS = Environmental Impact Statement; FFS = Florida Forest Service; THSF = Tate's Hell State Forest

ES.4.1.2.3 Low-Level Helicopter Insertions/Extractions

Low-Level Helicopter Insertions/Extractions (LLHI/E) involve flying helicopters near treetop level and above to an HLZ/DZ and inserting or extracting personnel. Insertion/extraction of personnel is conducted via fast rope, rappel, ladder, hoist or other means. Aircraft would fly between just above the surface to 3,000 feet above ground level (AGL). Table ES-3 details LLHI/E activities. *The difference between Subalternative 1 and the Proposed Action is that under Subalternative 1 there would be a reduced use of expendables and frequency of LLHI/E events, as shown in Table ES-3.*

LLHI/E Activity

Table ES-3. LLHI/E Details per Event

Vehicles/Aircraft	# Personnel	Expendables/Equipment	Duration	Frequency	Restrictions
Proposed Action					
Up to 4 total aircraft, combination of UH-60, CH-47, MH-47 There would be no more than 2 CV-22s used per event.	Up to 50 inserted/ extracted	Paintballs/plastic pellets, M-18 smoke grenades THSF only: 5.56-mm blanks, 7.62-mm blanks, GBSs	4–6 hours Day and night	2 times/ month (spread out among LZs/DZs)	Avoid hunting season concflicts per the FFS (EIS Sections 5.10/6.10). Avoidance of established recreational sites.
Subalternative 1					
Same	Same	None (except at BRSF hardened camp site LZ/DZs)	Same	3–5 days at a time (spread out among 5 LZs/DZs) 2 times/year	Same

BRSF = Blackwater River State Forest; DZ = drop zone; EIS = Environmental Impact Statement; FFS = Florida Forest Service; GBS = ground burst simulator; LZ = landing zone; mm = millimeter; THSF = Tate's Hell State Forest

ES.4.1.2.4 Temporary Combat Support Areas

TCSA Activity

Under both the Proposed Action and Subalternative 1, Temporary Combat Support Areas (TCSAs) involve set-up of logistical and medical tents and equipment around LZs/DZs and Blackwater Airfield in support of training activities. Table ES-4 details TCSA activities. *The difference between Subalternative 1 and the Proposed Action is that under Subalternative 1 there would be a reduced use of expendables and frequency of TCSA events, as shown in Table ES-4.*

Table ES-4. TCSA Details per Event

Vehicles/Aircraft	# Personnel	Expendables/Equipment	Duration	Frequency	Restrictions
Proposed Action					
May arrive at location via various aircraft or land vehicles	Up to 50	Paintballs/plastic pellets, M-18 smoke grenades, tents, generators THSF only: 5.56-mm blanks, 7.62-mm blanks, GBSs	24 hours Day and night	Tied to frequency of other LZ/DZ activities.	Avoid hunting season concflicts per the FFS (EIS Sections 5.10/6.10). Avoidance of established recreational sites.
Subalternative 1					
Same	Same	None (except at BRSF hardened camp site LZ/DZs)	Same	2 times/year	Same

BRSF = Blackwater River State Forest; EIS = Environmental Impact Statement; GBS = ground burst simulator; FFS = Florida Forest Service; mm = millimeter; THSF = Tate's Hell State Forest

ES.4.1.2.5 Airdrops

Static Line Personnel Drop

Airdrops (ADs) involve the insertion and/or resupply of personnel via release of troops or equipment over land-based DZs or over water. This activity would be in support of training activities. Table ES-5 details AD activities. *The difference between Subalternative 1 and the Proposed Action is that under Subalternative 1 there would be a reduced use of expendables and frequency/ location of airdrop events as shown in Table ES-5.*

Table ES-5. Airdrop Details per Event

Proposed Action					
Vehicles/Aircraft	**# Personnel**	**Expendables/ Equipment**	**Duration**	**Frequency**	**Restrictions**
Up to four total aircraft, combination of UH-60, CH-47, C-130, C-17, C-145; CV-22 There would be no more than 2 CV-22s used per event.	Up to 72 depending on associated training activity and aircraft.	Land drops: approximately 15 cubic foot container of water (~300 pounds); containerized delivery system (~500 pounds); paintballs/plastic pellets, M-18 smoke grenades Water drops: 2 Zodiacs	24 hours Day and night	4 times/day 232 days/year (spread out among LZs/DZs) C-17 used 2-3 times/year	Avoid hunting season concflicts per the FFS (EIS Sections 5.10/6.10). Avoid established recreational sites and public boaters. No power motors in Bear Lake (BRSF). Avoidance of noise impacts to private landowners and established recreational sites during approach and departure.
Subalternative 1					
Same	Same	None (except at BRSF hardened camp site LZ/DZs)	Same	Static Line Personnel Drops and HALO: Quarterly Equipment/CDS drops: BW6 & BW7 only 10 days/month up to 40 days/year	Same Static Line Personnel Drops restricted to LZ/DZ BW12

BRSF = Blackwater River State Forest; DZ = drop zone; EIS = Environmental Impact Statement; FFS = Florida Forest Service; LZ = landing zone

ES.4.1.2.6 Air/Land Vertical Lift

Air/Land Vertical Lift (A/LVL) involves the insertion and/or resupply of personnel and/or equipment via landing an aircraft directly into an HLZ or on a fixed-wing aircraft landing site. Table ES-6 details A/LVL activities. *The difference between Subalternative 1 and the Proposed Action is that under Subalternative 1 there would be a reduced use of expendables as shown in Table ES-6.*

A/LVL Activity

Table ES-6. A/LVL Details per Event

Vehicles/Aircraft	# Personnel	Expendables/ Equipment	Duration	Frequency	Restrictions
Proposed Action / Subalternative 1					
Up to two total aircraft, combination of CV-22, UH-60, CH-47, C-130, C-145.	Up to 72 depending on associated training activity and aircraft.	Paintballs/plastic pellets, M-18 smoke grenades THSF only: 5.56-mm blanks, 7.62-mm blanks, GBSs	24 hours Day or night	4x/day 232 days/year (spread out among LZs/DZs at each forest) Blackwater Airfield used up to 12 times/year	Avoid hunting season concflicts per the FFS (EIS Sections 5.10/6.10). Avoidance of noise impacts to private landowners and established recreational sites during approach and departure.
Subalternative 1					
Same	Same	None (except at BRSF hardened camp site LZ/DZs)	Same	Same	Same

BRSF = Blackwater River State Forest; DZ = drop zone; EIS = Environmental Impact Statement; FFS = Florida Forest Service; GBS = ground burst simulator; LZ = landing zone; mm = millimeter; THSF = Tate's Hell State Forest

ES.4.1.2.7 Cross-Country Dismounted Movements

CCDM Activity

CCDMs involve the movement of operators (i.e., personnel) on foot across land areas from one location to another as part of simulated assault and reconnaissance training activities. CCDM may occur on or off roads or on unimproved trails. CCDM may also include crossing of streams and wetland areas. Table ES-7 details CCDM activities. *The difference between the Proposed Action and Subalternative 1 is that under the Proposed Action CCDM may occur anywhere within the forest per the restrictions identified in the EIS, while under Subalternative 1 dismounted movements would only occur in a proposed movement corridor identified between Blackwater Airfield and a BRSF hardened camp site (STOP Camp), and there is a reduced use of expendables.* The movement corridor is approximately 476 acres in size.

Table ES-7. CCDM Details per Event

Vehicles/Aircraft	# Personnel	Expendables/Equipment	Duration	Frequency	Restrictions
Proposed Action					
None	Up to 72 depending on associated training activity Personnel would be in groups of 12	Paintballs/plastic pellets, M-18 smoke grenades THSF only: 5.56-mm blanks, 7.62-mm blanks, GBSs	24 hours Day or night	2 times/ quarter	Avoid hunting season concflicts per the FFS (EIS Sections 5.10/6.10). Avoid established recreational sites.
Subalternative 1					
None	Same	None (except at BRSF hardened camp sites).	Same	Same	Same

BRSF = Blackwater River State Forest; EIS = Environmental Impact Statement; FFS = Florida Forest Service; GBS = ground burst simulator; mm = millimeter; THSF = Tate's Hell State Forest

ES.4.1.2.8 Roadway Vehicle Use


CCVM Activity

Roadway Vehicle Use (RVU) involves the movement of personnel transport vehicles (ranging from high-mobility multipurpose wheeled vehicles [HMMWVs] to 2.5-ton trucks) and all-terrain vehicles (ATVs) across established roads from one location to another in support of resupply, logistics, and troop transport. RVU will utilize established roadways and associated easements, as well as vehicle water crossing points currently established and utilized by the FFS. Table ES-8 details CCVM activities. *The difference between the Proposed Action and Subalternative 1 is that under Subalternative 1 there would be a reduced use of expendables.*

Table ES-8. CCVM Details per Event

Proposed Action					
Vehicles/Aircraft	**# Personnel**	**Expendables/Equipment**	**Duration**	**Frequency**	**Restrictions**
HMMWVs, 2.5-ton trucks, motorcycles, minibikes, lightweight tactical ATVs	Up to 5/vehicle Up to 10 vehicles	Paintballs/plastic pellets, M-18 smoke grenades THSF only: 5.56-mm blanks, 7.62-mm blanks, GBSs	24 hours Day or night	3 times/ quarter	Vehicles are restricted to designated forest roads only. Avoid hunting season concflicts per the FFS (EIS Sections 5.10/6.10).
Subalternative 1					
Same	Same	None (except at BRSF hardened camp sites)	Same	Same	Same

ATV = all-terrain vehicle; BRSF = Blackwater River State Forest; EIS = Environmental Impact Statement; FFS = Florida Forest Service; GBS = ground burst simulator; HMMWV = high-mobility multipurpose wheeled vehicle; mm = millimeter; RVU = Roadway Vehicle Use; THSF = Tate's Hell State Forest

ES.4.1.2.9 Blackout Driving

Blackout Driving (BD) involves nighttime driving of ATV-type vehicles and HMMWVs without full headlights. Headlights would be diminished to "cat eyes," which are essentially small slits placed over the headlights; this provides enough light to utilize night vision goggles while driving. Roads used for this activity would be temporarily closed (likely in concert with emplacement of obstacles) to the public to prevent safety mishaps. Table ES-9 details BD activities. *The difference between the Proposed Action and Subalternative 1 for this activity is that under Subalternative 1 this activity would not occur*.

Table ES-9. Blackout Driving Details per Event

Proposed Action					
Vehicles/Aircraft	**# Personnel**	**Expendables/Equipment**	**Duration**	**Frequency**	**Restrictions**
Motorcycles, lightweight tactical ATVs (quad runners), HMMWVs	Up to 5/vehicle Up to 10 vehicles	None	8 hours	3 times/quarter	Only on closed/designated roads.
Subalternative 1					
Would not occur					

ATV = all-terrain vehicle; HMMWV = high-mobility multipurpose wheeled vehicle

ES.4.1.2.10 Emplacement of Obstacles

Emplacement of Obstacles (EoO) involves placement of items such as plastic or nylon fencing along unpaved roads and Hardened Camp Sites; no concertina wire or barbed wire would be used. The ground surface may be slightly disturbed (within 6 inches of ground surface) from placement of stakes and pickets. All wire, stakes, and/or pickets would be recovered at completion of the training exercise. Table ES-10 details EoO activities. *The difference between the Proposed Action and Subalternative 1 for this activity is that under Subalternative 1 this activity would not occur.*

EoO Activity

Table ES-10. EoO Details per Event

Proposed Action					
Vehicles/Aircraft	**# Personnel**	**Expendables/Equipment**	**Duration**	**Frequency**	**Restrictions**
N/A	N/A	Plastic/nylon fencing Stakes/pickets	Length of associated training exercise Day or night	10 times/ year	Removal of all obstacles after exercise. Avoid hunting season concflicts per the FFS (EIS Sections 5.10/6.10).
Subalternative 1					
Would not occur.					

EIS = Environmental Impact Statement; FFS = Florida Forest Service

ES.4.1.2.11 Bivouacking/Assembly Areas

B/AA Activity

Bivouacking/Assembly Areas (B/AA) involve the use of an area, mainly tented, where troops eat and rest overnight in support of training activities. There may be slight surface ground disturbance (within 6 inches of ground surface) from placement of tent stakes and pickets. All expendables/ equipment would be recovered prior to leaving the site. Table ES-11 details B/AA activities. *The difference between the Proposed Action and Subalternative 1 for this activity is that under Subalternative 1 this activity would not occur.*

Table ES-11. B/AA Details per Event

Proposed Action					
Vehicles/Aircraft	**# Personnel**	**Expendables/Equipment**	**Duration**	**Frequency**	**Restrictions**
Three ATVs and trailers to haul equipment	Up to 72 depending on associated mission activity.	Tents and other supplies. Stakes/pickets	Length of associated training exercise. Day or night	10 times/ year	Avoid hunting season concflicts per the FFS (EIS Sections 5.10/6.10).
Subalternative 1					
Would not occur.					

ATV = all-terrain vehicle; EIS = Environmental Impact Statement; FFS = Florida Forest Service

ES.4.1.2.12 Communications and Surveillance Operations

Communications and Surveillance Operations (C&SO) involve the use of sites to coordinate communications and/or conduct surveillance of "enemy forces" in support of training activities. The ground surface may be slightly disturbed from placement of tent stakes and pickets. Table ES-12 details C&SO activities. This activity would occur under both the Proposed Action and Subalternative 1. *There is no difference between the Proposed Action and Subalternative 1 for this activity.*

Table ES-12. C&SO Details per Event

Proposed Action / Subalternative 1					
Vehicles/Aircraft	**# Personnel**	**Expendables/Equipment**	**Duration**	**Frequency**	**Restrictions**
HMMWVs, rental vehicles (trucks), ATVs and trailers to haul equipment	Up to 72 depending on associated mission activity.	Communication equipment, radio antennas, tents, radar equipment, camouflage nets, generators. The Air Force would use standard equipment; however, the goal when employing generators is to minimize noise and detection footprints. As such, the Air Force would use generators in the forests temporarily, only when necessary, and as approved by the FFS.	Length of associated training exercise Day or night	Monthly	Avoid hunting season concflicts per the FFS (EIS Sections 5.10/6.10). Avoidance of established recreational sites.

ATV = all-terrain vehicle; EIS = Environmental Impact Statement; FFS = Florida Forest Service; HMMWV = high-mobility multipurpose wheeled vehicle

ES.4.1.2.13 Amphibious Operations


Amphibious Operations

Amphibious operations involve boat operations on the water, loading/unloading of personnel to and from boats, and movement in streams, rivers, and lakes as part of egress/ingress operations. Amphibious activities would avoid those waterways used extensively for recreational purposes (e.g., Coldwater Creek) and would mostly utilize larger bodies of water given the size requirements for the amphibious watercraft. Should recreational users and military trainees be present on the same body of water, training activities would not impede canoers, kayakers, or tubers. Table ES-13 details amphibious operations activities. This activity would not occur under Subalternative 1. *The difference between the Proposed Action and Subalternative 1 for this activity is that under Subalternative 1 this activity would not occur.*

Table ES-13. Amphibious Operations Details per Event

Proposed Action					
Vehicles/Aircraft	**# Personnel**	**Expendables/Equipment**	**Duration**	**Frequency**	**Restrictions**
Up to six various inflatable and rigid powered watercraft per event; engines 35 to 200 hp. Watercraft may consist of Zodiacs and aluminum boats up to 28 feet with or without outboard motors.	Up to 6/watercraft	Paintballs/plastic pellets, M-18 smoke grenades THSF only: 5.56-mm blanks, 7.62-mm blanks, GBSs	12 hours Day and night	10 times/ year	Avoid established recreational sites and public boaters. No power motors in Bear Lake (BRSF).
Subalternative 1					
Would not occur.					

BRSF = Blackwater River State Forest; hp = horsepower; mm = millimeter; THSF = Tate's Hell State Forest

ES.4.1.2.14 Natural Resource Consumption

Natural Resource Consumption (NRC), similar to survival training, is the procurement of natural food sources such as small game and rodents, and eating of vegetation. Survival training is a critical component of military training and involves foraging and training personnel on critical survival skills (which includes teaching how to prepare traps and snares). It does not involve substantial consumption of natural resources and the likelihood of successful snaring or trapping is traditionally minimal. Locations of avoidance areas (e.g., sensitive habitat areas and species) would be communicated to participants prior to implementation of the activity. Table ES-14 details NRC activities. *The difference between the Proposed Action and Subalternative 1 for this activity is that under Subalternative 1 this activity would not occur.*

Table ES-14. NRC Details per Event

Proposed Action					
Vehicles/Aircraft	**# Personnel**	**Expendables/Equipment**	**Duration**	**Frequency**	**Restrictions**
N/A	20 (10 teams at 2/team)	None	7 days Day and night	2 times/quarter	Avoid protected wildlife and plants.
Subalternative 1					
Would not occur.					

N/A = not applicable

ES.4.1.2.15 Overwater Hoist Operations

Overwater Hoist Operations (OHO) involve hoist rescue and recovery of personnel and watercraft over water. Aircraft would conduct operations from just above the surface of the water to a height of about 150 feet. Aircraft would hover about 10 feet over the surface for drops and about 80 feet above the surface for retrievals. Table ES-15 details OHO activities. *The difference between the Proposed Action and Subalternative 1 for this activity is that under Subalternative 1 there would be no expendable use.*

OHO Activity

Table ES-15. OHO Details per Event

Proposed Action					
Vehicles/Aircraft	**# Personnel**	**Expendables/Equipment**	**Duration**	**Frequency**	**Restrictions**
Watercraft (see Table 2-15) Four total aircraft, combination of CV-22, HH-60, CH-47 There would be no more than 2 CV-22s used per event.	Up to 6/watercraft, including one safety swimmer, coxswain,medic, and assistant coxswain	Paintballs/plastic pellets, M-18 smoke grenades THSF only: 5.56-mm blanks, 7.62-mm blanks, GBSs	4 to 6 hours Day and night	1/month	No power motors in Bear Lake (BRSF). Avoid fishermen and boaters.
Subalternative 1					
Same	Same	None	Same	Same	Same

BRSF = Blackwater River State Forest; GBS = ground burst simulator; mm = millimeter; THSF = Tate's Hell State Forest

ES.4.1.2.16 Opposing Forces Vehicle Operations

During Opposing Forces Vehicle Operations (OFVO), two teams (one "Red," the other "Blue") compete to locate each other on established roads in a simulated urban environment. Personnel may exit vehicles to conduct "search activities." Aircraft may be used as a "spotter" to direct one of the teams; the aircraft would fly at between 16,000 and 23,000 feet AGL. Table ES-16 details OFVO activities. *The difference between the Proposed Action and Subalternative 1 for this activity is that under Subalternative 1 there would be no expendable use except at BRSF hardened camp sites.*

Table ES-16. OFVO Details per Event

Vehicles/Aircraft	# Personnel	Expendables/Equipment	Duration	Frequency	Restrictions
Proposed Action					
HMMWV Cessna 172 aircraft	Up to 5/vehicle Up to 10 vehicles	M-18 smoke grenades THSF only: 5.56-mm blanks, 7.62-mm blanks, GBSs	Day and night	5 times/week	Vehicles are restricted to forest roads, designated roads only. Avoid hunting season conflicts per the FFS (EIS Sections 5.10/6.10). Avoid established recreational sites.
Subalternative 1					
Same	Same	None (except at BRSF hardened camp sites)	Same	Same	Same

BRSF = Blackwater River State Forest; EIS = Environmental Impact Statement; FFS = Florida Forest Service; GBS = ground burst simulator; HMMWV = high-mobility multipurpose wheeled vehicle; mm = millimeter; THSF = Tate's Hell State Forest

ES.4.1.2.17 Hardened Camp Site Use

Urban Combat Training

Hardened Camp Site Use (HCSU) involves use of two hardened camp facilities located at BRSF. Both camps were established by the Florida State Department of Juvenile Justice (DJJ); one is identified as the Short-Term Offender Program (STOP) Camp, the other is the Santa Rosa Youth Academy. The STOP Camp was leased by the DJJ from FFS and returned after the program was shut down. These sites consist of buildings and infrastructure, such as utilities and roadways, and may be used as insertion/extraction points, HLZs/DZs, command and control centers, training areas for combat in urban environment training, or other training activity support. Table ES-17 details HCSU activities. *The difference between the Proposed Action and Subalternative 1 is that under Subalternative 1 UoEX activity consists of 60 total days per year, with frequency up to eight 5-day periods.*

Table ES-17. HCSU Details per Event (BRSF)

Vehicles/Aircraft	# Personnel	Expendables/Equipment	Duration	Frequency	Restrictions
Proposed Action / Subalternative 1					
Aircraft: CV-22, HH-60, CH-47 There would be no more than 2 CV-22s used per event. Vehicles: ATV-types HMMWVs	Up to 50	5.56-mm blanks, 7.62-mm blanks, GBSs, paintballs/plastic pellets, M-18 smoke grenades; simunitions	24 hours Day and night	5 times/week 232 days/year	Upkeep and maintenance of facility.
Subalternative 1					
Same	Same	Same types of expendables. Use: 60 total days per year, with frequency up to eight 5-day periods.	Same	Same	Same

ATV = all-terrain vehicle; GBS = ground burst simulator; HMMWV = high-mobility multipurpose wheeled vehicle; mm = millimeter

ES.4.2 Summary Comparison of Proposed Action and Subalternative 1 (Preferred Alternative) Details

The main differences between the Proposed Action and Subalternative 1, as described in Section ES.4.1, are summarized in Table ES-18.

Table ES-18. Proposed Action and Subalternative 1 Detail Summary

Action Component	Proposed Action	Subalternative 1
Emitter Sites	12 proposed sites	11 proposed sites
LZs/DZs	May potentially occur anywhere within BRSF/THSF subject to identified constraints in Section ES.4.3 and EIS Section 2.5.	13 potential LZs/DZs identified at BRSF (including Blackwater Airfield). 3 potential LZs/DZs identified at THSF.
Use of Expendables	At BRSF use of noise generating expendables limited to hardened camp sites; other expendables approved anywhere subject to identified constraints in Section ES.4.3 and EIS Section 2.5. At THSF all expendables approved subject to constraints in Section ES.4.3 and EIS Section 2.5.	At BRSF use of all expendables only approved at hardened camp sites; limited to 60 total days per year. At THSF no expendables approved for use.
Low-Level Helicopter Insertions/Extractions	Overall, frequency is twice/month. At BRSF, expendable use permitted anywhere per constraints identified in Section ES.4.3 and EIS Section 2.5; noise generating expendables only at hardened camp sites. At THSF noise-generating expendables permitted per constraints identified in Section ES.4.3 and EIS Section 2.5.	Overall, frequency is twice/year. At BRSF expendable use only approved at hardened camp sites. At THSF, no expendable use.

Table ES-18. Proposed Action and Subalternative 1 Detail Summary, Cont'd

Action Component	Proposed Action	Subalternative 1
Temporary Combat Support Areas	Overall frequency ties to other activities. At BRSF, expendable use permitted anywhere per constraints identified in Section ES.4.3 and EIS Section 2.5; noise generating expendables only at hardened camp sites. At THSF noise-generating expendables permitted per constraints identified in Section ES.4.3 and EIS Section 2.5.	Overall, frequency is twice/year. At BRSF expendable use only approved at hardened camp sites. At THSF, no expendable use.
Airdrops	Overall frequency is 4 times/day, 232 days/year (spread out among LZs/DZs). Expendable use permitted anywhere per constraints identified in Section ES.4.3 and EIS Section 2.5.	Static Line Personnel Drops and HALO: Quarterly Equipment/CDS drops: BW6 & BW7 only 10 days/month up to 40 days/year Static Line Personnel Drops restricted to LZ/DZ BW12 No expendable use anywhere except BRSF hardened camp sites.
Air/Land Verical Lift	At BRSF expendable use permitted anywhere per constraints identified in Section ES.4.3 and EIS Section 2.5; noise generating expendables only at hardened camp sites. At THSF noise-generating expendables permitted per constraints identified in Section ES.4.3 and EIS Section 2.5.	No expendable use anywhere except BRSF hardened camp sites.
Cross-Country Dismounted Movements	Movement may occur anywhere on either forest per constraints identified in Section ES.4.3 and EIS Section 2.5. At BRSF expendable use permitted anywhere per constraints identified in Section ES.4.3 and EIS Section 2.5; noise-generating expendables only at hardened camp sites. At THSF noise-generating expendables permitted per constraints identified in Section ES.4.3 and EIS Section 2.5.	At BRSF movement may only occur within the movement corridor identified in EIS Section 2.3.2.8. At BRSF expendable use limited to hardened camp sites. At THSF no expendable use.
Roadway Vehicle Use	At BRSF expendable use permitted anywhere per constraints identified in Section ES.4.3 and EIS Section 2.5; noise-generating expendables only at hardened camp sites. At THSF noise-generating expendables permitted per constraints identified in Section ES.4.3 and EIS Section 2.5.	No expendable use anywhere except BRSF hardened camp sites.
Blackout Driving	Would occur per Table ES-9.	Would not occur.
Emplacement of Obstacles	Would occur per Table ES-10.	Would not occur.
Bivouacking/ Assembly Areas	Would occur per Table ES-11.	Would not occur.

Table ES-18. Proposed Action and Subalternative 1 Detail Summary, Cont'd

Action Component	Proposed Action	Subalternative 1
Communications and Surveilance Operations	No difference – would occur per Table ES-12.	
Amphibious Operations	Would occur per Table ES-13.	Would not occur.
Natural Resource Consumption	Would occur per Table ES-14.	Would not occur.
Overwater Hoist Operations	At BRSF expendable use permitted anywhere per constraints identified in Section ES.4.3 and EIS Section 2.5. At THSF noise-generating expendables permitted per constraints identified in Section ES.4.3 and EIS Section 2.5.	No expendable use at either forest.
Opposing Forces Vehicle Operations	At BRSF expendable use permitted anywhere per constraints identified in Section ES.4.3 and EIS Section 2.5; noise-generating expendables only at hardened camp sites. At THSF noise-generating expendables permitted per constraints identified in Section ES.4.3 and EIS Section 2.5.	At BRSF expendable use limited to hardened camp sites. At THSF no expendable use.
Hardened Camp Site Use	Potential expendable use frequency: 5 times/week, 232 days/year.	Reduced expendable use frequency: 60 total days per year, with frequency up to eight 5-day periods.

BRSF = Blackwater River State Forest; DZ = drop zone; LZ = landing zone; THSF = Tate's Hell State Forest

ES.4.3 Operational Constraints

Section 2.5 of the EIS outlines more than 100 operational constraints associated with the Proposed Action. The operational constraints are components of the Proposed Action and would be implemented as part of the GLI proposal. The constraints serve to minimize or alleviate adverse impacts to the human and natural environment. The constraints would be incorporated into the EAFBI 13-212 operational plan as a special section on the state forests and would be reviewed and updated as required on an annual basis to ensure ongoing compatibility.

In order to ensure that all General Operational Constraints are identified and adhered to by training units, Eglin AFB's environmental management program has developed "Protection Levels" for areas on the Eglin Range that are utilized for ground training activities. These levels are based on General Operational Constraints and are integral to environmental resource protection. Under the Proposed Action, the Air Force would utilize a similar system tailored for BRSF and THSF; protection levels for the Proposed Action for both ground operations and noise are described in Tables ES-19 and ES-20, respectively, and are applicable to all training locations within the boundaries of the state forests. Activity outside the boundaries of the state forests is limited to use of public roadways for transportation.

Table ES-19. General Protection Levels for Proposed Action Ground Operations

Protection Level	Restrictions	Area Covered
Prohibited	No access is permitted.	Camp/recreational sites, any cultural resource "prohibited areas," piping plover critical habitat (THSF)
Restricted	All activities must remain on roadbeds of established roads, including troop movements, vehicle operations, digging, and any type of ground surface disturbance. No refueling of vehicles or aircraft allowed.	Point locations for apiaries; sensitive species locations and associated FNAI sensitive habitats (pitcher plant bogs, rare plants, rare animals, invasive species); 200-foot buffer around Florida Natural Scenic Trail and equestrian trails; 1,500 feet around flatwoods salamander habitat; 330-foot buffer around bald eagle nests.
RCW Buffer	Follow *Management Guidelines for the Red-Cockaded Woodpecker on Army Installations* (U.S. Army, 2007) and *Eglin AFB Red-Cockaded Woodpecker Programmatic Biological Opinion* (U.S. Air Force, 2013), Table 4-2.	200-foot buffer around RCW cavity trees for ground operations
Wood Stork Habitat Buffer	Follow *Habitat Management Guidelines for the Wood Stork in the Southeast Region* (USFWS, 1990).	500-foot buffer around wood stork feeding/roosting habitat. Currently there are no GIS data for habitat at either forest. However, should habitat be identified, these protections would be applied.
Limited Use-1 (LU-1)	*Approved Activities:* use of star cluster pyrotechnics (hand-held slap flares) only for emergency purposes; use of non-lethal small arms ammunition such as blanks and paintballs (at BRSF approved for paintballs only) – see GLI Noise Protection Levels Map for further restrictions on noise-generating expendables. Dismounted maneuver and incidental and consumptive land disturbance. *Not Approved:* use of smokes, flares, or simulators; off-road vehicle use – all vehicles must remain on established roads; land development and point land disturbance outside of previously disturbed roadbeds and road shoulders. LZ/DZ use except on approved FFS sites not requiring additional land development – see Noise Protection Levels Map for further restrictions on LZ/DZ use. No refueling of vehicles or aircraft allowed.	100 feet around wetlands, water bodies and floodplains; areas exhibiting very limiting soil characteristics (e.g., susceptible to erosion) for LZ and/or bivouacking; cultural resource areas with inadequate surveys and/or "not cleared" areas; Tate's Hell Camp Gordon Johnson Historic District
Limited Use-2 (LU-2)	*Approved Activities:* use of pyrotechnics (e.g., smoke grenades and GBSs) and non-lethal small arms ammunition such as blanks and paintballs (at BRSF approved for smoke grenades and paintballs only, with GBSs permitted only at hardened camp sites) – see GLI Noise Protection Levels Map for further restrictions on noise-generating expendables. Dismounted maneuver. Incidental, point, and consumptive land disturbance (includes catholes) outside of previously disturbed roadbeds and road shoulders if approved by FFS. LZ/DZ use only on approved FFS sites with FFS coordination required for any additional land disturbance – see Noise Protection Levels Map for further restrictions on LZ/DZ use. Refueling of vehicles or aircraft allowed only on asphalt or concrete surfaces. *Not Approved:* off-road vehicle use – all vehicles must remain on established roads.	All areas not covered by other protection levels

BRSF = Blackwater River State Forest; DZ = drop zone; FFS = Florida Forest Service; FNAI = Florida Natural Areas Inventory; GBS = ground burst simulator; GLI = Gulf Regional Airspace Strategic Initiative (GRASI) Landscape Initiative; LU-1 = Limited Use-1; LU-2 = Limited Use-2; LZ = landing zone; RCW = red-cockaded woodpecker; THSF = Tate's Hell State Forest; USFWS = U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

Table ES-20. Noise Protection Levels for Proposed Action Operations

Protection Level	Restrictions	Area Covered
Not Approved for LZs/DZs	No LZs or DZs permitted.	2,200-foot buffer around camp sites/recreational sites and in/out parcels with residential structures.
Avian Air Operations Buffer	No aircraft operations permitted.	500-foot buffer around RCW trees; 1,000-foot buffer around bald eagle nest trees.
Not Approved for Overflights below 500 feet AGL	No overflights below 500 feet AGL.	TA-5 horse riding/field trial area; 200-foot buffer around camp sites/recreational sites, the Florida National Sceneic Trail, and in/out parcels with residential structures.
Not Approved for Noise Generating Expendables	No noise generating expendable use allowed; includes blanks and GBSs.	4,000-foot buffer around camp sites/recreational sites and in/out parcels with residential structures.

AGL = above ground level; DZ = drop zone; GBS = ground burst simulator; LZ = landing zone; RCW = red-cockaded woodpecker

As stated previously, General Operational Constraints are inherent to the Proposed Action, in that they are considered components of the Proposed Action's implementation. As an example, a 200-foot activity buffer around identified red-cockaded woodpecker (RCW) cavity trees is a requirement of EAFBI 13-212. Just as CCDM at BRSF and THSF is a component of the Proposed Action, so too is the requirement to maintain a 200-foot activity buffer around RCW trees at either BRSF or THSF, since EAFBI 13-212 would be a component of the Proposed Action. Impact analysis in this EIS considers these requirements as part of the initial impact assessment. Thus, analysis of impacts to the RCW considers the implementation of the 200-foot activity buffer in the initial impact assessment; if potentially adverse impacts are identified, then Proposed Resource-Specific Mitigations were developed to minimize or avoid this potential.

ES.4.4 No Action Alternative

Under the No Action Alternative, the training activities identified under the Proposed Action would continue to occur on Eglin AFB as described and assessed in the *Interstitial Area Range Final Environmental Assessment Revision 2* and *Eglin AFB Riverine/Estuarine Environmental Assessment*. BRSF and THSF would not be utilized, and no new emitter sites would be used.

The No Action Alternative would not meet the purpose and need for the Proposed Action, in that there would be continued stress on the Eglin AFB user environment due to conflicts with hazardous and nonhazardous training activities. As use of the Eglin Range increases, these conflicts would become more frequent and problematic. Activities at BRSF, THSF, and the various proposed emitter sites would continue as described in the respective state forest management plans.

ES.5. ALTERNATIVE IMPACT ANALYSIS SUMMARY

The following provides an impact summary of the analyses presented in the Final EIS Chapters 3, 4, 5, and 6. Details on each specific action and the potential impacts as related to the respective location can be found in these chapters. The significance of impacts was determined by evaluating the context, intensity, and duration of the action (40 CFR 1508.27) and the relative effect on individual resources; context, intensity, and duration factors used in the analyses are described in each respective Chapter 3 resource area discussion. The impact analyses considers direct, indirect and cumulative impacts on resource along with how both beneficial and adverse impacts affect public safety, the characteristics of the geographic area and proximity of the Proposed Action and Subalternative 1 to sensitive resources, the potential controversial nature of the potential impact, whether possible effects are highly uncertain or involve unique or unknown risks, whether the action may establish a precedent for future actions with significant effects, cumulative impacts, impacts to cultural resources or endangered species, and whether the Proposed Action threatens to violate federal, state, or local laws or environmental protection requirements. Each of these aspects is addressed as appropriate in the applicable resource area sections and chapters in this EIS. General criteria for impacts to resource/issue areas are summarized below and are presented relative to individual resource/issue areas at each proposed location in Table ES-21:

- ***Beneficial*** – Beneficial impacts may occur under any context, intensity, or duration. These generally result in some benefit or overall improvement to the resource impacted by the action. Such impacts may include a reduction in air emissions or restoration of habitats; the scope of the impact is directly related to the context, intensity, and duration of the impact. Elimination of baseline air emissions or restoration of large areas of disturbed wetland may be considered significant beneficial impacts, while a small reduction in baseline air emissions or restoration of a small pocket of wetlands may be considered beneficial but relatively insignificant. Other than providing benefits to Air Force training capabilities, the Air Force has not identified any significant or insignificant beneficial impacts under the Proposed Action or Subalternative 1.
- ***Adverse*** – Adverse impacts generally result in detriment or degradation of the impacted resource, the degree or level of impact directly related to the context, intensity, and duration of the impact. The Air Force has identified the potential for adverse impacts for several resource areas; resources experiencing potential adverse impacts are shaded yellow in Table ES-21. Adverse impacts can either be significant or insignificant.
    - ***Significant*** – Physical aspects are easily perceptible, and typically endure over the medium-to-long term, with a regional context and a high intensity; however, significant impacts can occur potentially over the short term under any context given a high intensity. Significant adverse impacts are typically not recoverable over the short term, and require long-term recovery processes with extensive mitigation or revision of Proposed Action or Subalternative 1 to avoid or minimize impacts. An example of a

significant adverse impact would be destruction of large percentages of wetland areas or degradation of water quality that may affect human health and the environment.

- ***Insignificant*** – These impacts are typically short- to medium-term impacts under any context or intensity. Beneficial impacts that are not significant in nature may include restoration of small pockets of wetlands. Adverse but not significant impacts are typically recoverable over the short-to-medium term with mitigations required to minimize level of impact or potential for impact, the extent of mitigation dependent on the identified context and intensity of the impact. Examples of adverse impacts that are not significant may be short, intermittent increases in noise to transient recreational users that do not affect overall usability of the forest or the potential for localized, intermittent soil erosion on stream banks due to troop movement over the land-water interface during dismounted movements and amphibious operations. These are recoverable impacts over the short term through Proposed Resource-Specific Mitigations to avoid noise-sensitive areas for training in the case of noise impacts and, for soil impacts, minimizing the size of troop units conducting ground training activities, rotating land-water interface ingress/egress points, and not using ingress/egress points that show signs of erosion.

- ***Neutral or No Effect*** – These are impacts that are typically of a low-intensity, such that they are imperceptible regardless of context or duration. Such impacts, whether beneficial or otherwise, are recoverable over the short term without mitigation and result in no overall perceptible change to the resource. Resources experiencing neutral or no effects are identified as "green" in Table ES-21.

Table ES-21. Summary of Impacts and Associated Location in EIS

Resource Area	Proposed Action			No Action
	Emitter Sites	Blackwater River State Forest	Tate's Hell State Forest	
Airspace	Sections 3.2/4.2	Sections 3.2/5.2	Sections 3.2/6.2	Chapter 8
Noise	Sections 3.3/4.3	Sections 3.3/5.3	Sections 3.3/6.3	
Safety	Sections 3.4/4.4	Sections 3.4/5.4	Sections 3.4/6.4	
Air Quality	Sections 3.5/4.5	Sections 3.5/5.5	Sections 3.5/6.5	
Earth Resources	Sections 3.6/4.6	Sections 3.6/5.6	Sections 3.6/6.6	
Water Resources	Sections 3.7/4.7	Sections 3.7/5.7	Sections 3.7/6.7	
Biological Resources	Sections 3.8/4.8	Sections 3.8/5.8	Sections 3.8/6.8	
Cultural Resources	Sections 3.9/4.9	Sections 3.9/5.9	Sections 3.9/6.9	
Land Use	Sections 3.10/4.10	Sections 3.10/5.10	Sections 3.10/6.10	
Socioeconomics/ Environmental Justice	Sections 3.11/4.11	Sections 3.11/5.11	Sections 3.11/6.11	
Hazardous & Solid Materials/Waste	Sections 3.12/4.12	Sections 3.12/5.12	Sections 3.12/6.12	
Infrastructure/ Transportation	Sections 3.13/4.13	Sections 3.13/5.13	Sections 3.13/6.13	

Table ES-21. Summary of Impacts and Associated Location in EIS, Cont'd

Resource Area	Emitter Sites	Blackwater River State Forest	Tate's Hell State Forest	No Action
Subalternative 1				
Airspace	Sections 3.2/4.2	Sections 3.2/5.2	Sections 3.2/6.2	Chapter 8
Noise	Sections 3.3/4.3	Sections 3.3/5.3	Sections 3.3/6.3	
Safety	Sections 3.4/4.4	Sections 3.4/5.4	Sections 3.4/6.4	
Air Quality	Sections 3.5/4.5	Sections 3.5/5.5	Sections 3.5/6.5	
Earth Resources	Sections 3.6/4.6	Sections 3.6/5.6	Sections 3.6/6.6	
Water Resources	Sections 3.7/4.7	Sections 3.7/5.7	Sections 3.7/6.7	
Biological Resources	Sections 3.8/4.8	Sections 3.8/5.8	Sections 3.8/6.8	Chapter 8
Cultural Resources	Sections 3.9/4.9	Sections 3.9/5.9	Sections 3.9/6.9	
Land Use	Sections 3.10/4.10	Sections 3.10/5.10	Sections 3.10/6.10	
Socioeconomics/ Environmental Justice	Sections 3.11/4.11	Sections 3.11/5.11	Sections 3.11/6.11	
Hazardous & Solid Materials/Waste	Sections 3.12/4.12	Sections 3.12/5.12	Sections 3.12/6.12	
Infrastructure/ Transportation	Sections 3.13/4.13	Sections 3.13/5.13	Sections 3.13/6.13	

Impacts were evaluated with consideration of implementation of General Operational Constraints inherent to the Proposed Action associated with EAFBI operational procedures and other NEPA-related documents for similar actions occurring on the Eglin Range on similar resources. General Operational Constraints are a prerequisite for implementing the Proposed Action. Once analyses were completed, additional Proposed Resource-Specific Mitigations were identified to avoid or minimize adverse impacts to relatively impacted resources.

Overall, the Air Force has not identified any significant beneficial or significant adverse impacts associated with the Proposed Action or Subalternative 1. While the Air Force has identified the potential for adverse impacts to various resources, these impacts would be insignificant based on the context, intensity and duration of the identified impacts as described throughout Chapters 3, 4, 5, and 6. Impacts to public health and safety would be either avoided or minimized through implementation of operational constraints and mitigations. Any unique geographic characteristics (e.g., sensitive habitats, areas prone to erosion, etc.) associated with the proposed emitter or training sites would be avoided, and any potential adverse impacts to the quality of the human environment would be minimal (mainly the potential for occasional annoyance to recreational users from noise). There are no unknown risks or impacts that may be considered controversial in nature associated with emitter site use or training activities (such actions have been extensively analyzed in this EIS and other Air Force documents as referenced in this EIS), and the Proposed Action or Subalternative 1 is not precedent setting because the DoD utilizes public lands throughout the United States for both emitter sites and military training. Adverse impacts to cultural resources and endangered species have been identified; however, these impacts would also be minimized/mitigated through implementation of operational constraints and mitigations as identified through consultation under the National Historic Preservation Act and the

Endangered Species Act, respectively. Additionally, the use of emitter sites and conduct of training activities would comply with all federal, state, and local laws. Finally, the Air Force has not identified any significant potential for cumulative impacts (as discussed in Chapter 7). Therefore, based on the context, intensity, and duration of impacts identified in this EIS the Air Force has not identified significant beneficial or adverse impacts under the Proposed Action or Subalternative 1. Additionally, by virtue of the reduced scope of Subalternative 1 (i.e., reduced frequency, location, and number of proposed activities) impacts would be less than those identified under the Proposed Action.

More detail on impacts can be found in the respective resource-specific discussions provided in the associated EIS sections identified in Table ES-21.

The Air Force completed consultation with the United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) in accordance with Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act (ESA) on April 8, 2014, and has received concurrence on a finding of Not Likely to Adversely Affect sensitive species or habitat (USFWS, 2014). The Air Force has completed consultation with the Florida State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO), Advisory Council on Historic Preservation (ACHP), and Native American tribes in accordance with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA); a Programmatic Agreement outlines requirements associated with cultural resources protection and mitigation. A list of agencies and tribes contacted is provided in EIS Appendix B, *Public and Agency Involvement*, while ESA and NHPA consultation documentation and the Programmatic Agreement are provided in EIS Appendix C, *Consultation Documentation*. All completed NHPA consultation documents, including responses and findings from cultural resource consultation agencies, is provided in the Final EIS.

ES.6. NO ACTION ALTERNATIVE IMPACT ANALYSIS

Implementation of the No Action Alternative means that none of the Proposed Action components as described in Sections 4.1.1 and 4.1.2 would occur at the respective locations (emitter sites, BRSF, and THSF). All activities would remain on Eglin AFB, and no new emitter sites would be established. There would be no impacts to the proposed emitter sites, BRSF, or THSF beyond those resulting from normal activities at these locations, such as recreational use and typical forest management activities conducted by the FFS as identified in the respective state forest management plans. Evaluation of the impacts of these activities on the affected environment is beyond the scope of this EIS.

Impacts to the Eglin Range and associated airspace would be as described in the *Eglin AFB Final Interstitial Range Environmental Assessment Revision 2* (U.S. Air Force, 2013c), the *Eglin AFB Riverine/Estuarine Final Programmatic Environmental Assessment* (U.S. Air Force, 2004), and the *Eglin AFB Final Overland Air Operations Programmatic Environmental Assessment* (U.S. Air Force, 2006).

ES.7. PROPOSED RESOURCE-SPECIFIC MITIGATIONS

Based on the scope of activities associated with the Proposed Action, the inherent General Operational Constraints identified in Section 2.5 of the EIS, and related impact analyses detailed in the EIS, there are no identified Resource-Specific Mitigation impact minimization procedures necessary for the following resource areas: air quality, solid/hazardous materials and waste, and infrastructure and transportation.

Impact analysis of the Proposed Action has identified Proposed Resource-Specific Mitigations that would be implemented, in addition to General Operational Constraints in EIS Section 2.5, to further minimize or avoid adverse impacts for the following resources: airspace management, noise, earth resources, water resources, biological resources, safety, and land use. These Proposed Resource-Specific Mitigations are detailed in Section 2.7 of the EIS. in most cases impacts would be minimized such that impact significance levels would be reduced from "adverse" (yellow) to "neutral" or "no effect" (green) in Table ES-21. The identified mitigations would be incorporated into a Mitigation Plan, which would be a "living document" that would be reviewed and updated as required on an annual basis by the GLI Liaison and Landscape Implementation Team to ensure mitigation applicability and effectiveness.

ES.8. CUMULATIVE IMPACTS

Cumulative effects analysis considers the potential environmental impacts resulting from "the incremental impacts of the action when added to other past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future actions regardless of what agency or person undertakes such other actions" (40 CFR 1508.7). In this EIS, the Air Force has made an effort to identify actions on or near the action areas associated with the Proposed Action that are under consideration and in the planning stage at this time.

The Air Force evaluated the potential for significant cumulative impacts associated with the Proposed Action. No unmitigatible adverse impacts have been identified for use of emitter sites, thus the Air Force has not identified any correlating potential for cumulative impacts from emitter site use. Although the Proposed Action would result in incremental impacts when associated with identified past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future actions at BRSF and THSF, the Air Force does not expect the Proposed Action to result in any significant adverse cumulative impacts.

ES.9. OTHER NEPA CONSIDERATIONS

ES.9.1 Relationship Between Short-term Use and Long-term Productivity

Short-Term Uses

The Proposed Action would have minor short-term effects related to use of resources during land improvements in support of LZs, consumptive use, traveling, use of produced materials, fuels, etc. As a mitigating component of short-term uses of the environment, the Proposed Action would create economic benefits during training activities in the form of some jobs and the direct and indirect demand for goods and services.

Long-Term Productivity

Based on analysis of the Proposed Action, the Air Force has not identified any long-term adverse impacts to productivity as a result of unmitigated short-term impacts. The Proposed Action would result in short-term increases in direct and indirect demand for goods and services while training activities occur. Impacts would be intermittent over the long term as the GLI program is established and implemented. Long-term benefits to the FFS associated with lease fees would be realized through leasing agreements.

Short-Term Uses Versus Long-Term Productivity

The assessment of effects on long-term productivity is related to whether the project is consistent with long-term regional and local planning objectives. Under the Proposed Action, there would be minor increases in employment, income, and net fiscal benefits and revenues to the FFS and surrounding communities during training activities. Training activities at the state forests would be scheduled to avoid conflict with hunters and other recreational users, thus avoiding impacts to long-term productivity associated with recreational use of the forests.

ES.9.2 Irreversible and Irretrievable Commitment of Resources

NEPA requires that environmental analysis identify any irreversible and irretrievable commitments of resources involved in the implementation of the Proposed Action or alternatives. Irreversible and irretrievable resource commitments are related to the use of nonrenewable resources and the effects that the use of these resources could have on future generations. Irreversible effects primarily result from the use or destruction of a specific resource (e.g., energy and minerals) that cannot be replaced within a reasonable time frame. Irretrievable resource commitments involve the loss in value of an affected resource that cannot be restored as a result of the action (e.g., extinction of a threatened or endangered species or the disturbance of a cultural site).

Implementing the Proposed Action would require a commitment of natural, physical, human, and fiscal resources. In all of these categories, irreversible and irretrievable commitments of resources would occur in the form of utilization of energy resources such as fossil fuels (for transportation, associated with utility use, etc.). While none of the proposed activities involve direct habitat alteration, some biological resources would be directly lost as a result of consumptive use during training activities; however, no sensitive species would be impacted, and the amount of general wildlife species taken would be insignificant when compared with the amount of hunting taking place at each proposed location. Incidental contact (such as a vehicle strike) may also result in incidental mortality to some species; while this cannot be completely avoided, the potential can be minimized by implementation of the General Operational Constraints and Proposed Resource-Specific Mitigations identified in the EIS.

ES.9.3 Energy Requirements and Conservation Potential of Alternatives and Mitigation Measures

Energy requirements associated with the Proposed Action are limited to use of fossil fuels in support of transportation and utility use. Conservation potential for this resource

is limited to general energy conservation techniques, such as making sure no lights remain on at hardened camp sites, transportation pooling, etc.

ES.9.4 Natural or Depletable Resource Requirements and Conservation Potential

While use of natural resources as a component of the training environment would occur at each forest (e.g., consumption training), use of natural resources for the Proposed Action is expected to be "nonintrusive," in the sense that the goal of the Air Force in implementing the Proposed Action is to avoid to the greatest extent possible adverse impacts to natural and anthropogenic resources and to be compatible with FFS forest management plans. To this end, the Air Force has developed General Operational Constraints and Proposed Resource-Specific Mitigations to avoid or minimize impacts on the environment. Consequently, the Air Force would support conservation measures of the FFS through implementation of these requirements. Other than use of fossil fuels as discussed previously, there are no requirements for depletable resources associated with the Proposed Action.

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GRASI

Gulf Regional Airspace Strategic Initiative

Eglin Air Force Base, Florida

How to Make Your Comments Count

The Air Force is seeking comment on this Final Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) document. In order for your comments to be considered by the decision maker as part of the decision-making process for this action all comments must be received by July 6, 2015. The Air Force is not required to respond to comments on the Final EIS; however, all comments received will be made available to the decision maker.

Commenting on public policy issues or documents as a private citizen can be daunting, especially if the issues are technical. The most effective comments are those that provide useful information. Comments on the Draft EIS were used to improve the Final EIS document and analyses, and to provide decision-makers with relevant information about how the proposed and alternative actions are expected to affect the environment and the public. The more clear, concise, and relevant to the EIS your comments are, the more effective they will be and the more likely it is that they will be utilized to affect agency decisions. Consider the suggestions below to make it easier and more effective to participate.

Make your comments as specific as possible, backing up statements with explanations, facts, and references as appropriate.

- Establish your authority to comment, whether it is as a concerned citizen, representative of an interest group, or an expert.
- Be as specific as possible with your comments and refer to page numbers and paragraphs in the EIS.
- Support statements with details. If, for example, you feel a species was not sufficiently analyzed, focus on the particular problem or issue. Avoid broad statements such as "the document did not adequately analyze the impacts to biological resources."
- Read all relevant portions of the document for your concerns because the potential impacts to resources are likely to be described in more than one section. For example, a change in aircraft sound levels may affect wildlife, sensitive species, land use, aircraft operations, socioeconomics or have environmental justice consequences. These impacts may be described within different sections of a chapter. If you only read one section, you will miss the full impact analysis.

Finally, understand comment deadlines and processes.

Comments may be submitted at any time throughout the environmental impact analysis process. Please send your comments or questions on the Final EIS to Mr. Mike Spaits at the Eglin AFB Public Affairs Office.

National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) - A Disclosure Process Substantive Comments Make a Difference

The preparation of a National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) document does not determine which alternative to choose. It does not prevent environmental impacts from happening or guarantee the final decisions will be appreciated by anyone. It does not prohibit any actions. Simply stated, NEPA is an information disclosure process.

Therefore, non-substantive comments that express opinions or that are pointed, accusatory, or personal will receive reduced or no attention and will not be considered by the Air Force.

Substantive comments:

- Question, with fact-based reasons, the accuracy of information in the EIS
- Question, with fact-based reasons, the adequacy of, methodology for, or assumptions used for the environmental analysis
- Present new information relevant to the analysis
- Present reasonable alternatives other than those analyzed in the EIS that meet the purpose and need statement of the EIS
- Cause changes or revisions in one or more of the alternatives
- Note where clarifications should be made in the EIS.

Stay updated.

To submit your comments, or if you would like to receive information about the EIS please ask to be included on the EIS mailing list. Contact:

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